

### November Meeting

**Friday, November 19  
7:30 pm**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Reginald Driscoll  
Are You Grounded?**

**Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
1035 Carol Lane  
Lafayette, CA**

Continuously Licensed since 1962, Reginald is an ARRL Emergency Coordinator for the City of Concord, an ARRL Volunteer Examiner, an ARRL Official Emergency Station, and a Project Management Professional (PMP).

## Presidential QRM

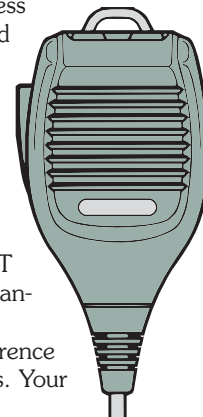
**By Trevor Hall, WA6JAU**

PACIFICON was memorable. October gave us the most memorable PACIFICON in many years. There were a lot of last minute changes, but everyone worked as a team and made it a success. I want to thank John Schulze, KR6CR and all the volunteers for a job well done. With the unexpected power failure a lot of hero's came forward with emergency power sources that kept the wheels of progress rolling. Thank you Rich Harrington, KN6FW, Ed Ritchey, K6SFD, and Trevor Raty, KG6MDW for your extraordinary emergency resourcefulness. Thank you Tom Schiller for the antenna and rotor installation for the Boy Scout Jamboree.

Looking forward to this year, we have the general meeting on November 19<sup>th</sup> at Our Saviors Lutheran church. On December 17<sup>th</sup> we have the Annual dinner. Please contact Dick Schulze if you plan to attend the annual dinner.

On the local scene, the BPL test in Menlo Park was cancelled. AT&T felt it was a better business decision not to enter the BPL market. This announcement was noted in a recent ARRL information letter.

It is time to elect new officers for 2005. If you want to make a difference and increase your ham radio enjoyment, run for many officer positions. Your club needs you.



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## AT&T, PG&E Dissolve BPL Partnership (Newington, CT - Oct. 22)

A BPL field trial in Menlo Park, California, where FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell had extolled the technology's virtues earlier this year, has been aborted before getting very far off the ground. The demonstration of BPL technology was co-sponsored by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and AT&T. ARRL learned this week that AT&T has decided to direct its business energies elsewhere, however, and pole-mounted BPL equipment has been dismantled. PG&E Director of Business Development Toby Tyler confirmed that his company and AT&T no longer were involved in the Menlo Park BPL pilot.

"AT&T pulled out as a result of their strategic shift away from consumer markets," Tyler told ARRL. "Without a telecom partner, it didn't make business sense for PG&E to continue with a trial."

AT&T spokesperson Michael Dickman said his company had "redirected its focus on serving enterprise customers," and, under the circumstances, has "limited involvement with BPL."

When Powell visited the Menlo Park BPL pilot project in July, he applauded AT&T and PG&E for "leading the way for this innovative technology" that he claimed "holds the great promise to bring high-speed Internet access to every power outlet in America." The chairman reiterated those sentiments October 14, when the FCC adopted new Part 15 rules to govern the deployment of BPL.

ARRL Santa Clara Valley Section Official Observer Coordinator Andy Korsak, KR6DD, told ARRL that AT&T pulled down the Main.net BPL boxes that he and his team had been monitoring in Menlo Park. "We heard only sparse Geiger counter-like clicks, indicating only perhaps system housekeeping between the four Main.net boxes I identified up on power poles," Korsak said.

When Powell spoke at Menlo Park this past summer, he said the future was bright for BPL. His optimism, at least in the case of the PG&E-AT&T BPL partnership, now appears to have been ill-advised.



## Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club W6CX

P.O. Box 23222  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523  
(925) 288-1730

The *Carrier* is a monthly publication of the Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club (MDARC). It is the policy of the editor to publish all material submitted by the membership provided such material is in good taste, relevant to amateur radio and of interest to MDARC members, and space is available.

All material must be submitted to the editor by the first day of the month of publication. Material is accepted on a first-in, first-out basis. Articles and other material may be submitted via Internet email to [carrier@gardnerclan.net](mailto:carrier@gardnerclan.net) or delivered to the editor at the address listed in the club roster. Material will be accepted in plain ASCII or rich text format (RTF). Material may also be submitted as hardcopy.

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### Club Officers

#### President

Trevor Hall, WA6JAU (925) 680-5209  
[wa6jau@netzero.net](mailto:wa6jau@netzero.net)

#### Vice President

Joe Cusumano, KF6RGH

#### Secretary

Dick Schulze, AA6DL  
[rmschulze@earthlink.net](mailto:rmschulze@earthlink.net)

#### Treasurer

Harold Johnsen, AE6FC (925) 287-1054  
[ae6fc@arrrl.net](mailto:ae6fc@arrrl.net)

#### Emergency Coordinator

Dana Jones, K6BRR

### Directors

Howard Burk, KE6PTT (925) 279-7208  
[ke6ptt@arrrl.net](mailto:ke6ptt@arrrl.net)

Jay Caldis, KT6Y (925) 939-1893  
[jcaldis@astound.net](mailto:jcaldis@astound.net)

Terry Matzkin, KE6WRE (925) 820-5848

Dick Brown, KT6X  
[dickjoanne@astound.net](mailto:dickjoanne@astound.net)

### Membership Chairman

Pete Slagle, K6XL (925) 901-0217  
[mdarc-membership@k6xl.org](mailto:mdarc-membership@k6xl.org)

### Carrier Editor

Jerry Gardner, W6UV (925) 735-7325  
[carrier@gardnerclan.net](mailto:carrier@gardnerclan.net)

### Webmaster

Marvin Miller, WA6GBW (925) 829-3410

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## General Meeting Minutes

October 15, 2004

The meeting, held at the San Ramon Marriott, was called to order by president, Trevor Hall, WA6JAU, at 7:35 p.m. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Harold Johnsen, AE6FC, treasurer, reported all current bills have been paid.

**Picnic 2005:** The president announced that next year's picnic will be held on September 24, 2005.

**Field Day:** John Pascale, NN6E, said he would not chair the event next year. We need a chair and also a site for the event.

**Program:** Ed Ritchie, K6SFD, introduced Dan Miller, K3UFG, from the ARRL headquarters, who previewed his talk emergency communications for the next day at PACIFICON. He said that some 6000 hams have signed up for the Emergency Communications Course since it started in 2000. Ed also introduced Mike Tracy, KC1SX, of the ARRL radio testing laboratory, who also previewed his presentation for the next day. He said they evaluate all advertising claims made in QST and evaluate projects submitted for publication.

**Adjourned:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:50

Dick Schulze, AA6DL, Secretary

## Board Meeting Minutes

October 4, 2004

The meeting of the board of directors of MDARC, held on October 4, 2004, at Carl's Jr., 2280 Oak Grove Road, Walnut Creek, was called to order by president, Trevor Hall, WA6JAU, at 7:30 p.m. The minutes of the September 6, 2004 meeting were approved.

**Board Members Present:** Dick Brown, KT6X, Howard Burk, KE6PTT, Jay Caldis, KT6Y, Joe Cusumano, KF6RGH, Trevor Hall, WA6JAU, Harold Johnsen, AE6FC, Terry Matzkin, KE6WRE, and Dick Schulze, AA6DL.

**Other Members and Guests:** Dave Gordon, N6SWE, Dana Jones, K6BRR, Mike Hole, KG6DER, Keith Lattin, N6PMF, Trevor Raty, KG6MDW, Pete Slagle, K6XL.

**Treasurer:** Harold reported approximately \$40,000 on hand. He said he cancelled the listing of the club URL in the Yellow Pages, which he previously thought would be free, because there will be a \$200 charge.

**Nomination of Officers:** The chair, Tim Barrett, had sent a request for additional members of the committee. Joe Cusumano, Jay Caldis and Dave Gordon volunteered.

**PACIFICON:** Jim Tittle and Keith Lattin are not available to display the trailer and no one else has volunteered so it will not be at the convention. Dick Brown has purchased the authorized digital projectors, InFocus, 1600 lumen, along with soft carrying cases. He will put on the inventory labels when received from Barry Winkler.

**Membership Application Form:** Pete will have 100 of the 2005 forms for PACIFICON.

**Picnic:** The chair suggested we pick a date for next year. On motion, September 24, 2005 was selected.

**Field Day:** Due to some miscommunication Lundborg Landing was not paid for the June 2004 event until recently. Harold will contact Lundborg in an effort to smooth over any bad feelings. We need an alternative location for next year. Trevor Raty offered to co-chair the event.

**Repeater Linking for Nets:** Howard has not yet created the macro to terminate the 440-144 MHz link after the ATV net. He was asked to create a macro for the linking by net control. He would not give a date for completion.

**Emergency Coordinator:** Dana discussed the emergency preparedness event scheduled for October 23, 2004 at Park Mead School on Newell Avenue in Walnut Creek. He also reported on the relationship of RACES and

*continued on page 4*

You are Invited to the

# Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club Annual Dinner

Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004

1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette

Doors open 6:00

Turkey Dinner at 7:00

Please respond by December 11<sup>th</sup> to

Janice Fujii, KG6VTD

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Children \_\_\_\_\_ at \$5 \_\_\_\_\_  
(10 and under)

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to MDARC

## Board Meeting Minutes

*continued from page 2*

ARC with the sheriff's office. He was complimentary of Sgt. Christian that works with the groups.

**Inventory of Equipment:** Terry asked about the progress. It is not done.

**Awards:** President Trevor asked for suggested names persons deserving of an award and that submissions be sent to him.

**Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m. Dick Schulze, AA6DL, Secretary

## Learning the Code

By Michael E. Hole, KG6DER

Several times in the past I made a stab at learning Morse Code. However, each time I would get to the fourth letter ('N' in the standard teaching order) and my brain would just go on the fritz. I just could not hear the difference between A (the third letter taught) and N. Despite being a Ham, only hearing something is the worst way for me to retain information. If there is no visual component to something it just won't stick in my brain.

Fortunately there is hope for those poor souls in my predicament. It's a program called "Code Quick 2000" and for me it worked. It not only has a different letter teaching order than the "standard" method, it also includes the visual component that I need to be able to learn anything well. In the case of Code Quick it takes two parts. You learn each character with a phonetic phrase that matches the dits and dahs of each character. For example, for the letter D the phonetic is "DOG did it" (-..). Each phonetic has an amusing drawing as the second part. It helps to attach that visual image to each letter so I can remember it better. I'll leave it to your imagination for what that one is for D.

It comes with 12 groups of lessons (called "Takes"), and each has 5-7 parts. Each teaches you 3-5 characters per Take. With the program set at 5 words per minute it takes about 1 and a half to 2 hours to get through each group. The advertisements say you can learn the code in 12 days. I tried that, but having to work late a couple of nights put me off schedule so a few times I was not able to get through a full take. Even with that I was ready to take my test after three weeks. Had that not happened, I would like to believe I would have finished in 12 days. You can get more information and purchase the program online for \$34.95 at <http://www.cq2k.com/> If you want to learn the code but, like me, really need to see something to learn it, then I highly recommend the program.

And yes, I did pass the test.

## Ramblings from the Editor

By Jerry Gardner, W6UV

The first thing I saw when I walked into the PACIFICON exhibit hall this year was a bunch of people walking around wearing anti-BPL stickers. After a while, it became clear that the ARRL booth was distributing these stickers to hams who probably don't even know what the letters B-P-L stand for let alone anything about the technology they're ostensibly against.

The ARRL's objections to BPL seem to stem from possible interference to amateur frequencies. While there have been reports of interference during several recent field trials, the ARRL

has taken the stand that this technology is inherently bad and must be opposed at all costs rather than working with the hardware vendors to reduce or eliminate the interference.

BPL will have several benefits to the public. First, it will increase competition in the broadband Internet market and drive down prices of DSL and cable. Second, it will bring high-speed Internet access to areas not currently (forgive the pun) served by either DSL or cable. In case you haven't noticed, the home market for computers and networking technology is vastly larger than the amateur radio market. Large computer vendors, such as CompUSA, probably generate more revenue in a day than Ham Radio Outlet does in a year. If the public wants BPL, and I believe they will, they're going to get it regardless of what the ARRL says or does. That's the reality of the marketplace.

Another benefit of BPL that probably few people realize is it allows utility companies to deploy intelligent meters. Today's meters are dumb—they require a person to come around once a month to read the meter and manually record the settings. With BPL in place, utilities can deploy smart meters that automatically transmit meter readings to the utility in real-time. Not only does this eliminate the need to employ an army of meter readers, it also allows the utilities to collect real-time usage information and use this to dynamically adjust their rates as demand changes, resulting in lower utility bills.

Don't read too much into the recent news from PG&E and AT&T. When it makes economic sense (and this will come sooner than later), you can bet that BPL will become a reality in this area regardless of what the ARRL does. ARRL would better serve the interests of the amateur community by working with the utilities and BPL hardware vendors rather than opposing them every step of the way.



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Net Control: KG6MDW

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South County	146.355/+ (100 PL) Ed Ritchie, K6SFD
West County	145.110/- Steve Adams, KF6WNH

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 1	7:30 pm	MDARC Board Meeting	Carl's Jr. 2280 Oakgrove, Walnut Creek
November 19	7:30 pm	MDARC General Meeting	Our Savior's Lutheran Church
November 28		December Carrier Deadline	
December 6	7:30 pm	MDARC Board Meeting	Carl's Jr. 2280 Oakgrove, Walnut Creek

**The Carrier**  
**Newsletter of the Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club**  
**P.O. Box 23222**  
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